



# DEET Repellent

## (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide)

### *What You Need to Know*

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*Deployment Medication Information Sheets (DMIS) are provided by the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine (USACHPPM). Written for soldiers and their families, they provide basic information on deployment medications that are intended as guidance only; consult your health care provider for more information.*

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#### **What is DEET repellent?**

- DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) is an ingredient in many insect repellents. It is the most effective compound found in insect repellents.
  - It is effective against mosquitoes, biting flies (gnats, sand flies, deer flies, stable flies, black flies), ticks, mites, and fleas.
  - Several commercial DEET formulations are available.
  - The standard military skin repellent contains 33% DEET and is a long-acting formulation that provides protection for up to 12 hours.

#### **Why should I use DEET repellent?**

- Insect bites are a painful nuisance and may even be a source of disease.
- It is important to consider the use of insect repellents when traveling to environments where biting insects are present.

#### **How do I use DEET repellent?**

- Use a product that contains 20% to 50% DEET. DEET in higher concentrations is not more effective.
- Follow label directions when applying DEET insect repellents.
- DEET should be applied lightly and evenly to exposed skin, being careful to avoid contact with eyes, lips, and broken or irritated skin. It should never be used underneath clothing.
- Wash off DEET when exposure to mosquitoes and other insects has ended.
- Since mosquitoes can bite through fabric, in addition to wearing DEET on exposed skin, treat your clothes with a repellent containing permethrin.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that people who may be exposed to disease-carrying insects, including children and pregnant women, and especially when traveling abroad, use both permethrin on their clothing and DEET on their exposed skin.

#### **What does the military require?**

DEET is required for use when on duty or deployed to environments with biting insects, especially if the insects are known to carry human diseases

## Are there any side effects?

Adverse reactions have rarely developed after contact with DEET. If you are allergic to DEET or any of the other ingredients listed on the container, see a health care provider prior to using DEET.

## Is there any reason I shouldn't use DEET?

- Do not use on children under 2 months old.
- Use DEET sparingly on children and don't apply to their hands, which they often place in their eyes and mouths.
- Do not use a DEET insect repellent if you have a documented allergy to DEET, or any of the other ingredients in the product.

## What if I'm pregnant or breast-feeding?

If you are pregnant or may become pregnant, or if you are breast-feeding, see your health care provider prior to using DEET.

### **You *can* avoid getting mosquito bites with DEET repellent!**

- Wear loose clothing that covers most of the body.
- Apply DEET repellent to all exposed areas of skin.
- For added protection, treat clothing with permethrin, which is an insect repellent licensed for use on fabric. Use either an aerosol spray can product, or a permethrin impregnation kit (IDA) for the field uniform.
- Use mosquito bed nets. For added protection, spray the net with permethrin.
- Eliminate mosquito-breeding sites by emptying water collected in outdoor containers or debris.
- Remain in well-screened areas, particularly from dusk through dawn, the time when mosquitoes are most active.

## Where can I get more information?

- Contact the health care provider at your military treatment facility.

### **DMIS Provided by:**

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